

# SPECIAL AIRWORTHINESS INFORMATION BULLETIN

Aircraft Certification Service  
Washington, DC



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

No. SW-03-27  
March 5, 2003

*We post SAIBs on the internet at [www.airweb.faa.gov](http://www.airweb.faa.gov)*

*This is information only. Recommendations are not mandatory.*

## Introduction

This Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin (SAIB) advises pilots, operators, and passengers of rotorcraft equipped with sliding doors of the **possibility of the sliding door becoming unusable or “jammed” during a survivable accident.**

## Background

During a recent rotorcraft accident, a sliding door became unusable due to fuselage deformation and an aft baggage door opening during the impact sequence. This condition prevented a passenger from using the sliding door as a point of egress. The crewmember advised the passenger to use an alternate egress point and the passenger safely exited the aircraft.

The sliding door was not equipped with an emergency egress “pop-out” window. Although the rotorcraft met all of the requirements for egress under FAR part 27.807, the **passenger was still unable to exit the aircraft using the nearest exit, the sliding door.**

Although there were no fatalities in this accident, during the accident debrief with the NTSB Investigator, the investigative team concluded that under other circumstances, a fatality could have resulted due to a jammed door and the confusion normally experienced after an accident.

## Recommendations

In order to reduce the probability of a fatality resulting from a jammed sliding door, we strongly urge pilots and operators of rotorcraft equipped with sliding doors to accomplish the following recommended procedures.

1. **AVOID COMPLACENCY** in pre-flight briefing to passengers on egress during an emergency situation. Brief passengers before every flight!
2. Review the operators’ pre-flight passenger briefing procedures and plans to insure passengers are made aware of alternate exits in the event of a sliding door impingement or jam. If “Sliding Door Jammed” is not currently a scenario briefed to passengers, add the scenario to your egress procedures.
3. In aircraft equipped with a sliding door that does not have emergency “push-out” windows, advise passengers that in an emergency, **they can kick out, or break the plastic window of the sliding door**, if there is no other means of exiting.

4. If the aircraft sliding door is equipped with emergency “push-out” window(s), you should ensure they are properly identified and marked in the aircraft. We recommend you call out window egress in your pre-flight briefing.

**For Further Information Contact**

Matthew Rigsby, Continued Operational Safety (COS), FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Standards Staff, Fort Worth, Texas 76193-0110; telephone (817) 222-5125; fax (817) 222-5961; e-mail: [matthew.rigsby@faa.gov](mailto:matthew.rigsby@faa.gov)